

NEWS FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

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Ulster County Comptroller March S. Gallagher Shines a Light On Comptroller's Office Budget Request

Kingston, NY (September 23, 2021) – Ulster County Comptroller March Gallagher today publicly released the Comptroller's Office budget request in anticipation of the County Executive's Budget presentation next week.

"The reasoning behind funding requests from departments and how money is ultimately allocated can be unclear to taxpayers and too often is given without context," Gallagher explained. "I want to shine a light on the process by using the Comptroller's Office as an example."

Local Law No. 3 of 2020, passed last year by the Ulster County Legislature, amended the Administrative Code of the County to require that department heads simultaneously provide their budget requests to the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature when submitting annual requests to the Executive's Budget Division. In response, the Comptroller's Office has provided its budget request and filed with the Clerk of the Legislature.

The 2022 Comptroller's budget request calls for the restoration of the Director of Internal Audit and Control position and an increase to contracted services. The position, which has a starting salary of \$76,128, was vacant and defunded during COVID to cut costs amid the pandemic crisis. The Comptroller is also requesting an additional \$38,500 for miscellaneous contractual expense to procure forensic auditing and other services needed for audits. The Comptroller's Office has identified that additional legal and investigative support is needed to conduct the taxpayers' business and perform effective audits. For instance, the audit of the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency, which is still on-going, has required that the Office of the Comptroller defend itself in litigation to obtain materials requested for audit. This increase of resources, however, is anticipated to more than pay for itself in additional savings and revenues for taxpayers.

Audits and reports of the Comptroller's Office have identified savings and new potential revenues adopted by the Legislature and implemented by the Executive of over \$2 million since the beginning of 2020. These savings and revenues include savings identified by the Sheriff and County Executive in the wake of the Comptroller's County Sheriff's Corrections Audit, the Short Term Rental Occupancy Tax Audit that lead to

the adoption of the voluntary collection agreement, identification of a lapsed New York State Department of Labor shared lease for the UlsterWorks OneStop employment center in the recent Ulster County Government Facilities & Properties Report, increased real property auction sales from moving the auction online at the Comptroller's recommendation, and more.

"Transparency makes for better decision making," said Ulster County Comptroller March Gallagher. "We've had very productive conversations with the Budget Division and the County Executive's Office about the Comptroller's Office budget, and we look forward to seeing a healthy and vibrant discussion about the Countywide 2022 budget. The 2022 budget provides a unique opportunity to plan for the future and make strategic investments in light of our healthy surplus from 2020, likely surplus for 2021, and American Rescue Plan funds."

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Comptroller's Budget Request Attached